**August 7, 2022**

**Historic Anchorage 4th Avenue Theatre Building**

By way of introduction, we, the **Alaska Fellows of the American Institute of Architects** (AIA) have all invested our careers as practicing architects throughout the state of Alaska. We have each been awarded Fellowship by the AIA, in recognition of our distinguished individual contribution to our profession. As leaders in our profession, we are advocates for the responsible development of excellent architecture anywhere, particularly in Alaska. At the same time, **we are adamantly opposed to the destruction of historically significant architecture**. The crown jewel of Anchorage historic architecture, the Anchorage 4th Avenue Theatre Building, should not be destroyed to make way for this proposed $200,000,000+ development. We are very disappointed and saddened that **Peach Investments has decided to proceed with demolition of the Anchorage 4th Avenue Theatre Building.** We acknowledge that according to the August 7 ADN article, Peach Investments is making some effort to preserve and incorporate specific features of this historic building into their ambitious plans for a mixed-use development of block 41 where the 4th Avenue Theatre Building is located. **We do not agree with the Peach decision to demolish this structure because of** **cost.** We emphasize the landmark significance of this building as Anchorage’s pre-eminent historical building, **which** **can and should be preserved, restored, and repurposed.** Doing so will uniquely enhance the design character of the proposed development.

**The 4th Avenue Theatre is a building with a story unlike any other.**  As a treasured piece of Anchorage history, it has deep and emotional significance to many Alaskans from around the State with fond memories of visiting the building to see their first movies and attend special and significant events. The story of this Historic building is very well documented and easy to access. In a restored state, the 4th Avenue Theatre Building has great appeal for Alaskans and our growing tourism economy; visitors wish to see local history by experiencing a community’s past architectural gems.

Admittedly, the building is showing its age, in large part due to years of neglect and lack of use, and will require significant funds to appropriately preserve, restore and re-purpose. Yes, historic preservation can be costly, certainly more than demolition and new construction. However, preserving the historic character of our community, as a component of this $200,000,000+ development is appropriate, and will enhance the monetary, aesthetic, and emotional value of the finished product for residents and visitors to enjoy for years and years to come.

**Incorporating this historic structure into this development will not eliminate construction jobs.**

There are many examples of successful developments around the country that have gone the extra mile to preserve and incorporate historically significant buildings into the fabric of the projects, showing appropriate respect for the history of local communities.

**Please stop demolition of this precious building NOW!!**

**We, the FAIA members of Alaska, respectfully ask the developers to show respect for Anchorage by using the historic building detailed records they have documented to fully restore the façade that is being destroyed.** We further request they, with their architects, proceed with the design of their project in a manner which will fully utilize the façade, lobby, and historic interior finishes of historic building, effectively improving their ambitious development for Downtown Anchorage.

America’s best cities, developers, and architects have developed exceptional, noteworthy projects by incorporating important historical buildings into their designs to yield successful projects of rich, excellent, community-sensitive architecture.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Alaska Fellows of the American Institute of Architects**

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